

BLACK-HEADED BUNTING.

Emberiza melanocephala, *Scopoli*.

Le Brunt crocote.

WE are not able to enter into a minute detail respecting the habits and manners of this beautiful species of Bunting, as it has never been known to visit the British Islands, nor, as far as we are able to ascertain, either the northern or western portions of the European Continent; the middle and southern districts and the border-line which joins the Asiatic confines being its native locality.

M. Temminck informs us that it is very abundant in Dalmatia and all over the Levant, and common in Istria and in the environs of Trieste; he also states that it sings agreeably, and chooses hedgerows and low bushes for its place of incubation, building near the ground and laying four or five white eggs, thinly sprinkled with minute dots of a light ash-colour. Its food consists of seeds, grains, and occasionally insects.

In the male the whole of the head and the cheeks are deep black; the sides of the neck, throat, and the whole of the under surface of a fine king's-yellow; the back of the neck, the scapulars and back are of a rich rufous brown; the rump and tail-coverts inclining to yellow; the wings and tail light brown, each feather having a lighter edge; the beak ashy-blue; feet and tarsi light brown; length about six inches and a half.

In the female the whole of the upper surface is brown, the middle of each feather inclining to black; the throat yellowish white; the whole of the under surface inclining to a yellowish red.

In all our collections from Western India we receive this species in abundance, or if not this identical bird, one very closely allied to it, having all its characters, except that the feathers of the head instead of being entirely black are tipped with a grayish brown, and the rest of the plumage, which in the European species is so vivid and distinct, is less pure and decided.

The specimens from which our figures were taken form part of the collection of the Zoological Society of London, and were received from Berne. Switzerland we believe to be the western bounds of its locality.

In the annexed Plate we have figured a male and female in their spring plumage.